**

Inauguration of the Bongo District Research-for-Development Platform: Upper East Region, Ghana

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Through action research and development partnerships, Africa RISING will create opportunities for smallholder farm households to move out of hunger and poverty through sustainably intensified farming systems that improve food, nutrition, and income security, particularly for women and children, and conserve or enhance the natural resource base.

The three regional projects are led by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (in West Africa and East and Southern Africa) and the International Livestock Research Institute (in the Ethiopian Highlands). The International Food Policy Research Institute leads the program’s monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. <http://africa-rising.net/>

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# Introduction

The meeting was chaired by Akaditi Ayambire, the District Chief Executive and assisted by Alhaji Musbao the District Director of Agriculture to ensure that, the Research-for Development (R4D) platform for the district is formed to help operationalize the bottom up demand - led approach envisaged for the project.

The meeting brought together stakeholders from other NGOs, district assembly, Ministry of Food and Agriculture(MoFA), private sector, media houses, marketers and farmers within IITA project areas. A total of forty one (41) participants were present.

# Highlights of the R4Dplatform inauguration

## District Coordinating Director’s welcome address

The District Coordinating Director in his speech thanked Dr Asamoah Larbi, Country Representative of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture and Chief Scientist of Africa RISING West Africa for involving the district administration in all activities since project inception. He also thanked all stakeholders who attended the inauguration, especially the Director of Ministry of Food and Agriculture who also doubles as the acting Regional Director of Agriculture for the Upper East Region, for ensuring that stakeholders are brought together to inaugurate a platform, which will help in setting priorities for research and ensure sustainability of the project.

## Address by District Director of Agriculture

The Director, Alhaji Musbao in his speech charged members who will be chosen as executives of the platform to be judicious in their responsibilities. He also called on them to be selfless in discarding the roles given to them because the community was greatly relying on them to play a big part in addressing their challenges. Alhaji Musbao further noted that the platform will improve extension and information system for smallholder farmers, farmer organization and agribusiness so that, they can make informed decisions about technology adoption.

## Presentation by IITA - Africa RISING

Dr Asamoah Larbi welcomed the participants on behalf of IITA and the Africa RISING project. In his presentation, he outlined the activities of IITA and explained further the need for the R4D platform. He said the Africa Research in Sustainable Intensification for the Next Generation(Africa RISING) program, will contribute significantly to the adoption of new and sustainable intensification farming technologies in the region, the platform will also serve as the medium for taking the appropriate and needed innovations to the intervention communities rather than, imposing research activities on farmers. Dr Asamoah noted that despite government's effort to help farmers, we still need to work more to address the plight of small-scale farmers by tackling issues like food safety, security and access to market.

# Meeting objectives and expected outputs

Purpose of the meeting was to launch R4D committee to serve Samboligo community and elect executives to come out with their own plans and initiatives to solve most of the issues that are of importance to the community.

## Specific objectives

1. Identification of problems affecting crop and livestock production in the community;
2. Identification of available opportunities within the community that farmers can exploit especially during the dry season to reduce poverty and enhance better standard of living; and
3. Plan together action base research activities together with the farmers for adoption.

## Expected output

1. Capture major problems affecting crops and livestock in the community; and
2. Capture key opportunity that could be looked at to enhance the standard of leaving of women and children.

# The meeting process

The meeting was facilitated by Asamoah Larbi, Dominic Sobreh and Desire Naab from Africa RISING. The chief scientist together with participants outlined the various actors and their responsibilities as follows:

**Ministry of Food and Agriculture**

* Backstopping technical support at the district
* Coordinating agricultural activities
* Dissemination of extension activities

**Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research**

* Coordinate to generalize research agenda
* Implementing/supervision of activities at the district level, monitoring , evaluation and adoption of technologies

**Financial Institutions**

* Agricultural financing scheme to smallholder farmers

**Ghana Health service**

* Nutritional plans for the district and ensuring safety of key crop products
* Advise mothers on nutritional and personal hygiene
* Demonstration on food processing in communities to address the malnutrition

**Service providers**

* Input supply to farmers, providing agricultural input especially improved seeds at the community level to farmers
* Tractor operators should be around to plough and harrow at a very moderate price and also be available at all time during the season
* Aggregation of agricultural produce should be around to bring all produce together for farmers to get equally good price from their produce

**Chiefs, Tindana and Elders**

* Endorse, communicate and facilitates community entry and land acquisition for all activities. The chief who is the tradition authority would have to create by-laws to protect the project in the community
* Makazie exercises the authority over the women’s group and determines prices of commodities at the farm gate level

**Assemblymen**

* Liaison officers and also local politicians who will help in terms of land acquisition dispute resolution in the project area.
* Sensitize farmers in the intervention communities to adopt and take full advantages of the innovation to enhance their standard of leaving.

**Ghana Education Service**

* Communication of information and innovations through pupils to parents
* Education of farmers on adoption of technologies.

# 

# Discussions during the meeting

To ensure the committee was formed in participatory manner, all actors were grouped, and individuals were selected to represent each group. They were then tasked to elect the executives. Table 1 below, shows the list of elected members and executives of the Research-for-Development platform.

## Composition of district and community level R4D platform

The following institutions were listed to be part of the R4D platform at district and community levels:

* Rural banks
* Ministry of Food and Agriculture
* Assemblymen/policy makers
* Chiefs and elders/ opinion leaders
* NGOs
* Women group
* Tindana/landlords
* Ghana Health Service (G.H.S)
* Veterinary Officers
* Ghana Education Service (G. E. S)
* Public relations (Electronic and print media)
* Farmer Base Organization(FBOs)

**Table 1:** List of platform members elected

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Position | Institution |  |  |
|  | Grace Anafu | Chairman | Ministry Of Agriculture |  |  |
|  | Jacob Akalga | Vice Chairman | Farmer Base Organization (Samboligo) |  |  |
|  | Nicholas Atibiga | Secretary | Ministry Of Agriculture |  |  |
|  | Philip Atongo | Treasure | Bongo Rural Bank |  |  |
|  | Bertrand Nabere | Organizer | Association Of Church Development Project | | |
|  | Henry Ayamga | Member | Ministry Of Agriculture(Livestock) | |  |
|  | Saddat Hamidu | Member | Ministry Of Agriculture(Veterinary Officer) | | |
|  | Cosmos Asaah | Member | Ministry Of Agriculture |  |  |
|  | Alice Amoah | Member | Farmer Base Organization(Samboligo) |  |  |

# Closing remarks

Dr. Larbi thanked the committee for accepting to take up the task ahead. He asked that the committee comes out with an action plan, indicating what they intend to do so that funds can be released on time for them to execute their activities in the community. The team was given a deadline to submit their action plan. He also advised the executives to open a bank account to enable easy funding of the committee’s activities. The meeting came to an end with a closing prayer from a participant.

# Annexes

Annex 1: Participants profile

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Stakeholder segment** | **Functions in the platform** | | **Representation during the inauguration of platform** |
| **Farmers- (Crop & livestock)** | Users of research products.  Generate research agenda.  Engage in R4D process. | | 6 |
| **Input dealers** | First line of supply of inputs for out scaling | | 1 |
| **Produce traders** | Access to markets.  First line in produce quality assurance | 1 | |
| **Produce processors** | Add value to products  Create demand for produce | | 1 |
| **Researchers** | Generate new innovations to solve problems  Support extension and adoption | | 7 |
| **Media** | Innovation information dissemination | | 1 |
| **Ministry of Food agricultural extension staff** | Support adoption process  Support participatory research | | 12 |
| **District and Regional agriculture director** | Policy guidance for the R4D work | | 1 |
| **Local Government** | Policy guidance for the R4D work | | 4 |
| **Development partners** | Up and out scaling of innovations  Inform R4D process  Provide extension support | | 2 |
| **Community heads** | Lead the community innovations adoption process | | 5 |
| Total | | | 4 |

Annex 2: List of participants

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Name | Community | Institution |
| 1 | Nicholas Atubiga | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 2 | Grace Anafo | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 3 | Musbau Alhaji. Ahmed | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 4 | Bertrand A. Nabare | Bolgatanga | Association of Church Development Project |
| 5 | Tobopaale Roger | Wa | Africa RISING |
| 6 | Mark Bukari Kofi | Navrongo | Africa RISING |
| 7 | Linda L. Atibilla | Bolgatanga | Youth Harvest Foundation |
| 8 | Ismail Mahama | Wa | Africa RISING |
| 9 | Paul Awugah | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 10 | Mary Asante | Wa | Africa RISING |
| 11 | Dominic Sobreh | Navrongo | Africa RISING |
| 12 | Ayamga Atanga | Samboligo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 13 | Asogbire Eric | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 14 | Agama Azane | Samboligo | Farmer |
| 15 | Hamidu Sadat | Samboligo | Farmer |
| 16 | Emmanuel Abobire | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 17 | Baba Musah | Samboligo | Farmer |
| 18 | Georgina Agua | Samboligo | Processor |
| 19 | Peter Konlan | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 20 | Dambayi Patience | Bongo | Ghana Health Service |
| 21 | Cosmos Asaah | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 22 | Henry Yamgah | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 23 | Aloroh Nso | Bongo | Agricultural Input Dealer |
| 24 | Ayamgah Tony | Zorko | Farmer |
| 25 | Adongo Sheila | Bongo | Processor |
| 26 | Hawah Osumani | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |
| 27 | Atongo Philip | Bongo | Bongo Rural Bank |
| 28 | Jacob Akalga | Samboligo | Farmer |
| 29 | Alice Amoah | Samboligo | Farmer |
| 30 | Akantae Portia A. | Tamale | Africa RISING |
| 31 | Dr. Asamoah Larbi | Tamale | Africa RISING |
| 32 | Amadu Iddrisu Seinu | Bolgatanga | Media |
| 33 | Adongo Deng | Bongo | Ghana Education Service |
| 34 | Ayambire Akaditi | Bongo | Bongo District Assembly |
| 35 | Abobire Christiana | Samboligo | Youth Harvest Foundation |
| 36 | A.W.A. Bila | Samboligo | Farmer |
| 37 | Anama William | Bongo | Aggregator |
| 38 | Aghana Felix | Samboligo | Tindana |
| 39 | Desire N. Dickson | Navrongo | Africa RISING |
| 40 | Asaah Augustina | Samboligo | Queen Mother |
| 41 | Adongo Nyaaba | Bongo | Ministry of Agriculture |